

Message Text

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12

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7587

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, JO, IS

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN PRESS TREATMENT OF WEST BANK ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: LOCAL PRESS TREATED WEST BANK ELECTION RESULTS NOT IN TERMS OF VICTORY OF NEW OVER OLD (PRO-HASHEMIT) POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, BUT AS VICTORY FOR PALESTINIAN/ARAB CAUSE. END SUMMARY

2. JORDANIAN MEDIA ABANDONED PRIOR THEME OF ILLEGALITY OF ELECTIONS UNDER OCCUPYING AUTHORITY, AND CLAIMED IT WAS ISRAELIS WHO WANTED TO SUBVERT ELECTIONS TO PREVENT EXPRESSION OF TRUE ARAB MOOD. ACCORDING TO GOJ-ASSOCIATED AR-RAYY: "ISRAEL HAD HOPED THAT THE STRIKES AND CLASHES ON THE WEST BANK WOULD COMPEL THE ARABS TO WITHDRAW MANY OF THEIR CANDIDATES FROM THE ELECTIONS SO THAT THE OCCUPATION AUTHORITIES COULD REPLACE THEM WITH LOYAL ELEMENTS...THUS CREATING A 'MODERATE LEADERSHIP' WHICH WOULD CAUSE THE PEOPLE TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH CONCERNS SUCH AS MUNICIPAL SERVICES. BUT THE SUCCESSFUL ARAB STRIKES...BROUGHT TO THE FORE STRUGGLING LEADERS. THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE NOT IMPORTANT FOR THEIR RESULTS. THEY ARE IMPORTANT AS A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE OCCUPATION. THE ELECTIONS COULD HAVE

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BEEN SOMETHING ELSE HAD WE MAINTAINED THE OLD NEGATIVE ATTITUDE."

3. ARTICLES PUBLISHED AFTER ELECTIONS PRESENTED FACTUAL ACCOUNT OF BALLOTING, INCLUDING PHOTO OF ARAB WOMAN VOTING AND PUBLICATION OF WINNING SLATES. EDITORIALS APRIL 14 INTERPRETED RESULTS AS VICTORY FOR ARAB RESISTANCE. AD-DUSTOUR: "SYMPTOMS OF FEAR HAVE APPEARED IN ISRAELI CIRCLES FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS. MINISTER PEREZ WAS THE FIRST TO WARN THAT THE RETURNS WERE A VICTORY FOR THE PLO. THIS PESSEMISM... MEANS THAT THE HOPES THE ISRAELIS ATTACHED TO THE ELECTIONS HAVE TURNED UPSIDE-DOWN, AND ISRAEL MUST DEAL WITH THE NEWLY-ELECTED MEMBERS ON THE BASIS OF THEIR RESISTANCE TO OCCUPATION." AR-RAYY: "THE ELECTIONS COULD HAVE BEEN BOYCOTTED BY OUR PEOPLE. BUT THROUGH A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH OCCUPATION, OUR BROTHERS ON THE WEST BANK HAVE INTRODUCED HONORABLE ALTERNATIVES AND HAVE ESTABLISHED IN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCILS A POLICY OF REJECTIONISM AND OF ATTACHMENT TO THE LAND." ENGLISH-LANGUAGE JORDAN TIMES LABELED EVENTS, "THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF EXPRESSIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL WILL." TOPIC VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM LOCAL PRESS APRIL 15.

4. COMMENT: WHILE MANY WILL PORTRAY ELECTIONS' OUTCOME NOT ONLY AS RADICAL TREND BUT ANTI-JORDAN ONE ON WEST BANK (FBIS JN 132008Y REPORT OF VOICE OF PALESTINE COMMENTARY), JORDANIAN MEDIA ATTEMPTS TO INTERPRET ELECTIONS SIMPLY AS EXPRESSIONS OF ANTI-ISRAELI OCCUPATION--A WEST BANK ATTITUDE THAT, AS AMCONSUL JERUSALEM POINTS OUT, EMBRACES WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL OUTLOOKS AMONG WEST BANK ARABS. THUS, JORDANIAN MEDIA LINE BEST SUMMED UP BY JORDAN TIMES EDITORIAL COMMENT: "THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS WILL NOW PORTRAY THE ELECTIONS AS A RADICALIZATION OF THE WEST BANKERS. THAT IS INACCURATE, UNFAIR, SIMPLISTIC, AND TANGENTIAL....THE ELECTION RESULTS ARE SIMPLY THE LATEST TESTAMENT TO THE PALESTINIAN NATION'S WILL TO EXIST ACCORDING TO ITS OWN WISHES..."
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